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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **PNG ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION COMMISSION RELEASES FINAL REPORT ON A BELL 206L3 HELICOPTER ACCIDENT THAT OCCURRED AT AIYURA NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, EASTERN HIGHLANDS PROVINCE**

The Acting Chief Commissioner of the PNG Accident Investigation Commission (AIC), Captain Aria Bouraga, today announced the public release of the AIC's Final Report on the investigation conducted into a Bell 206L3 helicopter accident that occurred on 4 October 2022 at Aiyura National High School, Eastern Highlands Province.

Captain Bouraga explained, *"On 4 October 2022, at about 15:10 local time, (05:10 UTC ) a Bell 206L3 helicopter, registered P2-SIL, owned and operated by Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) Aviation, was conducting a VFR charter flight from Aiyura National High School, in Ukarumpa, Eastern Highlands Province (EHP) to Nadzab Airport, Morobe Province, Papua New Guinea, when during its line-up for take-off, the tail rotor (TR) blades struck a powerline."*

The AIC was notified of the accident on the 5 October 2022. The AIC immediately commenced an investigation in accordance with its mandate under the Civil Aviation Act 2000 (*As Amended*) and pursuant to ICAO Annex 13 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation.

The Final Report stated that the pilot started up the helicopter, lifted off the ground as it turned toward the North, and began tracking towards the nominated departure point. During the left turn to set heading to the departure heading, the tail rotor blades struck one of the powerlines.

Capt. Bouraga explained that pilot's decision and subsequent actions were influenced by optical illusion presented by the camouflaged background and appearance of the powerlines in reference to other environmental cues, and the distance in which the pilot had assessed the powerlines before departure resulting in his misjudgement of the distance of the powerlines from where he stood. Furthermore, because of the size of the wires, the background into which the wires blended, and, likely the rotor downwash dust around the helicopter, during taxi to the departure point, the pilot did not notice at any point that the helicopter had flown near the obstacle (powerlines). During the left turn at the nominated departure position, the helicopter tail rotor blades struck the powerlines. The pilot managed to land the helicopter back on the field without further event.

The Final Report of the investigation is available on AIC's website [www.aic.gov.pg](http://www.aic.gov.pg).